



# National Weather Service

## Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



January 1999

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons Killed	Number of Persons Injured	Estimated Damage Property	Estimated Damage Crops	Character of Storm
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### WISCONSIN, Southeast

**WIZ062-067>068**

**Iowa - Lafayette - Green**

**02 0700CST  
2359CST**

**0**

**0**

**Winter Storm**

Specific snow accumulations: Darlington (Lafayette Co.) 16.5 inches, Monroe (Green Co.) 12.5, Dodgeville (Iowa Co.) 10.0 inches.

Additional details for this Winter Storm can be found in the narrative paragraphs associated with the 01/02/99 Blizzard over southeast Wisconsin during the 0900-2359CST timeframe.

**WIZ051>052-058>060-  
064>066-069>072**

**Fond Du Lac - Sheboygan - Dodge - Washington - Ozaukee - Jefferson - Waukesha - Milwaukee - Rock - Walworth -  
Racine - Kenosha**

**02 0900CST  
2359CST**

**0**

**5**

**11K**

**Blizzard**

A snarling, crippling winter storm/blizzard all but paralyzed southcentral and southeast Wisconsin, depositing 10 to 20.5 inches of snow, generating wind gusts to 45 to 63 mph, whipping up huge drifts of 4 to 8 feet in height, and causing numerous chain-reaction collisions of dozens of vehicles. For some locations, this storm was the worst since the famous January 1947 storm. Thanks to cold temperatures of 15 to 22 degrees, the snow was fluffy. Consequently, the horizontally moving snow was so dense that it looked like fog, as mentioned in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel newspaper. The Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport closed down at the height of the storm on Saturday, and Greyhound buses stopped running at 1030CST. Many flights at the Madison airport were canceled. As a result, roughly \$1.0 million in revenue was lost in the aviation community. Nearly all cities and villages declared a snow emergency to help snow plowing operations which were expected to total about \$1.0 million. Snowpiles eventually resembled small mountains.

Peak wind gusts from the east/northeast were generally around 39 knots (45 mph) west of a line from Fond du Lac to Janesville where Winter Storm conditions prevailed. Visibilities in the Winter Storm area were occasionally below 1/4 mile... but most of the time around 1/2 mile. East of this line peak gusts were 43 to 48 knots (50 to 55 mph), except for gusts to around 52 knots (60 mph) along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Port Washington (Ozaukee Co.) had the highest measured gust of 55 knots (63 mph). Blizzard conditions prevailed east of the Fond du Lac to Janesville line where visibilities were frequently 1/4 mile or less... and occasionally near zero.

There were 4 cases of frostbite treated at Milwaukee County hospitals. In addition, a man suffering from hypothermia was rescued from his garage in Wauwatosa. Otherwise, there were 4 indirectly-related deaths in Milwaukee County due to people suffering from heart attacks after shoveling snow.

In Waukesha County, about 60 vehicles were involved in a chain-reaction collision at 1400CST on I-94 near the Highway 18 exit due to near zero visibilities. There was one indirectly-related fatality in this accident. Elsewhere, a 51 vehicle pile up occurred at 0930CST on I-94 in Racine County. A 16 vehicle pile up was reported in Kenosha County on I-94 at 1330CST. Milwaukee County noted a 14 vehicle pile up near Mitchell Field at 1130CST. A driver in Kenosha County said it was like driving in a can of white paint. All together there were probably about 300 vehicle accidents in southcentral and southeast Wisconsin, resulting in at least 17 indirectly-related injuries.

Structural damage was reported in the city of Port Washington due to the strong winds. Two businesses noted damage to signs and roofs. In addition, a church had a stained glass window blown in. The wind also snapped some power lines, resulting in the loss of electrical service to about 5000 customers in the counties of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha; and to about 2000 customers in Sheboygan county.

What made the winter storm/blizzard so different was the duration of blizzard-like conditions for 12 to 15 hours, while snowfall rates occasionally peaked at 1 to 1.5 inches per hour. Synoptically, the responsible low pressure eventually moved north/northeast through southeast Illinois, western Indiana, and then up along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan. Generally, a swath of 15 to 20 inches of accumulation extended from around West Bend (Washington Co.) to western Kenosha County. Elsewhere a band of 12 to 16 inches was observed from Lafayette County northeast through western Dane County to western Sheboygan County.

Specific snow accumulations in the blizzard area include...

Washington County: 20.5 inches at Big Cedar Lake, 18.5 at West Bend, and 18.3 at Cedarburg

Kenosha County: 19.0 inches at Wilmot, and 14 at Kenosha

Waukesha County: 17.0 inches at Waukesha

Milwaukee County: 16.7 inches at West Allis, and 15.4 inches at Mitchell Field

Ozaukee County: 15 inches at Port Washington

Sheboygan County: 15 inches at Sheboygan Falls, and 12.5 inches at Sheboygan

Walworth County: 14.7 inches at Lake Geneva

Jefferson County: 14.5 inches 4SSE of Sullivan, 14 inches at Watertown, 13.2 at Ft. Atkinson



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### WISCONSIN, Southeast

Racine County: 14 inches at Burlington, and 12 at Caledonia

Fond du Lac County: 13.5 inches at Fond du Lac

Rock County: 13 inches at Milton, 12.5 at Janesville, and 11.5 at Beloit.

#### **WIZ046>047-056>057-063 Marquette - Green Lake - Sauk - Columbia - Dane**

**02 1000CST  
2359CST**

**0 0**

**Winter Storm**

Specific snowfall totals include...

Columbia County: 16.0 inches at Wisconsin Dells, and 14 at Portage

Dane County: 16.0 inches at Windsor, 14.1 at Cross Plains, 11.5 at Stoughton, and 10.8 at Madison Airport

Marquette County: 13.1 inches at Oxford, and 11 at Montello

Sauk County: 12 inches at Rock Springs

Green Lake County: 10 inches at Green Lake

Additional details for this Winter Storm can be found in the narrative paragraphs associated with the 01/02/99 Blizzard over southeast Wisconsin during the 0900-2359 timeframe.

#### **WIZ046>047-051>052- 056>060-062>072**

**Marquette - Green Lake - Fond Du Lac - Sheboygan - Sauk - Columbia - Dodge - Washington - Ozaukee - Iowa - Dane -  
Jefferson - Waukesha - Milwaukee - Lafayette - Green - Rock - Walworth - Racine - Kenosha**

**05 0000CST  
1800CST**

**0 0**

**Extreme Cold**

The combination of an arctic high pressure ridge, a fresh, deep snowcover, clear skies, and light winds allowed temperatures to plunge to well below zero across southcentral and southeast Wisconsin. Several new low temperatures records were set: -23 at Janesville (Rock Co.), breaking the old daily record of -19 set back in 1998, and -20 in the city of Kenosha.

Baraboo (Sauk Co.) was the coldest in the state with a -32, while Monroe (Green Co.) dropped to -26. Other observed minimums...Portage (Columbia Co.) -24, Stoughton (Dane Co.) -23, Ft. Atkinson (Jefferson Co.) -21, Germantown (Washington Co.) -21, Madison (Dane Co.) -20, Kenosha (Kenosha Co.) -20, Union Grove (Racine Co.) -20, Watertown and Lake Mills (Jefferson Co.) -20, Waukesha (Waukesha Co.) -19, Beloit (Rock Co.) -19, Wisconsin Dells (Columbia Co.) -17, Racine (Racine co.) -16, Fond du Lac (Fond du Lac co.) -15, and Milwaukee (Milwaukee Co.) -15

Thousands of calls to local AAA and car service centers were logged due to stalled vehicles. Maximum temperatures were only around zero. This was the coldest weather observed since February 1996 in southcentral and southeast Wisconsin.